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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: U.S.-INDIA NUCLEAR DEAL, GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS, WAR AGAINST TERRORISM, AFGHANISTAN; NEW DELHI.

This cable reports on relevant media reaction from India's large non-English press. Embassy New Delhi reports on English-language media via email in the daily "Early Edition". USG customers please write to Geeta Krishali (KrishaliG@state.gov) to subscribe to the "Early Edition."

U.S.-INDIA NUCLEAR DEAL

1. "GEORGE BUSH'S GIFT," op-ed in the October 11 DAINIK JAGRAN Hindi daily by political commentator and Congress party leader Rajiv Shukla: "President Bush's gesture of signing the nuclear agreement on the Indian Dasshera festival day is significant in that it is a unique and unprecedented agreement. At one point, disappointment and failure was writ large on the face of PM Singh and it seemed that India was not destined to get nuclear energy, which can light up its homes. Obviously, Pakistan and China were the happiest, but their happiness was short-lived. Pakistan wanted a similar deal, but the U.S. has no faith in it.... Just as PM Singh and his team was quietly laboring toward the deal, despite opposition in the U.S. Congress, President Bush put in all his might. He deserves all the credit for this great development. The U.S. usually reaps all the benefits - this time it is all to India's advantage."

2. "WILL THE NUCLEAR-COMMERCE AGREEMENT SHACKLE INDIA'S LIBERTY?" editorial in the October 12, 2008 centrist

Gujarati daily GUJARATMITRA. "At last, the Indo-U.S. civilian nuclear deal has anchored the harbor of success. The agreement envisioned by U.S. President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Singh in 2005 has culminated into a deal after overcoming the rigorous and tumultuous period of its journey... While this deal has ended India's nuclear isolation and marked India as a de facto nuclear weapons state, the one pertinent question, or rather suspicion, remains whether India will be at liberty to conduct nuclear tests if circumstances warrant such an act. While the Indian government maintains that it is only bound by the provisions of the 123 agreement and not by the Hyde Act, the Americans have not stated this aspect clearly. At a time when Al Qaeda's influence in Pakistan is growing with each passing day, India cannot afford to ignore this perception of growing threat. In such circumstances, one only hopes that the nuclear deal does not prove to be a shackle for India's security interests. If this is taken care of, then this deal is certainly welcome in its present form."

GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS

¶3. "LESSONS FOR WALL STREET FROM MICRO-FINANCE," op-ed in the October 12, 2008 NAVBHARAT TIMES Hindi daily by economic expert Swaminathan Anklesaria Aiyar: "Major financial corporations all over the world are in deep crisis, but only category is relatively safe - that is

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micro-finance. Micro-financial institutions are still progressing and even expanding. Even as big finance defaults, micro-financial institutions have not defaulted. While big finance lends to industry, micro-financial institutions lend to poor women to start small businesses. What can micro-finance teach Wall Street? The biggest lesson is not to depend on collaterals, and assess the cash flow of borrowers, leaving a cushion to ensure repayment."

¶4. "LEST NOT THIS RECESSION TURN INTO A FISCAL TSUNAMI!" editorial in the October 12, 2008 right-of-center Urdu daily "URDU TIMES", Mumbai: "The financial slowdown in America and Europe has affected almost all the economies of the world. America is facing an economic crisis of the scale of the 1928 Great Depression. In order to avert a possible collapse, the American congress has approved a bail out (rescue) package of \$800 billion. However, no stone seems to be turning, while the G 8 countries are putting their heads together to extricate themselves from this economic upheaval. The present crisis is more because the FIIs, who had invested more than 18 billion dollars in Indian markets, have grown suspicious. Everyone today is intending to sell off his shares. If the current pace of the FIIs continuing to withdraw their investments from India goes on in the wake of the ongoing financial turmoil, the Indian sensx might plummet to even less than the 8000 mark. The government ought to hasten its pace of emergency measures, whatever it intended. If more time elapses before proper measures are undertaken, the way Asian countries are often procrastinating, the current economic earthquake staring in the face of the country, might take a disastrous turn. It is even possible that it might take the shape of an economic tsunami for us."

WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

¶5. "WE ARE NOT TERRORISTS" editorial in the October 13, 2008, Mumbai edition of left-of-center Marathi daily LOKSATTA. "The unprecedented musical movement titled Yeh Hum Naheen ("We are not that [terrorists]" that is

gaining ground in Pakistan is an appropriate reply to all those who label all Muslims as terrorists after the 9/11 terrorist attack on the U.S. At an unfortunate time when the veil, the beard and other Islamic symbols have come to be recognized as security threats to the world, such a movement helps in spreading a positive global message. Yeh Hum Naheen, which has also manifested itself as a popular website, features some of Pakistan's best vocal talents who have united to sing out the peace message the world needs to hear. Yeh Hum Naheen has also given a voice to the silent majority who has been misrepresented. Apart from the unifying musical band, the campaign was aimed at getting people to sign a petition condemning terrorism. So far around 28 lakh signatures have been collected. It is a world record in itself. The radical Islamists will never take cognizance of these signatures..."

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¶6. "PREVENTING THE BLASTS", editorial in the October 13 right-of-center Urdu daily "MUNSIF", Hyderabad: "Hyderabad blasts are not the solitary incident of terror. Such incidents have taken place earlier as well. Unless the monster of terrorism is wiped out completely, peace and harmony shall be difficult to be established. Unless the intellectuals do not see terrorism in the appropriate perspective, the menace shall expectedly continue. It has been discovered from the recent investigations that elements who want to cause destruction in the country are not operating in small modules, instead they are well connected to large terror networks having institutional frameworks. The havoc being wreaked is not because of external factors emanating from our neighboring country, as was widely believed. Instead, terrorism has become indigenous now."

AFGHANISTAN

¶7. "INVITATION TO TALIBAN TO JOIN POWER", editorial in the October 13 right-of-center Urdu daily "RASHTRIYA SAHARA", New Delhi: "A pleasant yet surprising news from Afghanistan is the invitation of President Hamid Karzai to the Taliban for sharing power. This proposal was made by Hamid Karzai's brother in a confidential meeting in Saudi Arabia. Naturally, this proposal would have been made by Karzai only when he would have got the green signal from America and Britain. This clearly indicates that America and its allies have realized it fairly well that their domination over Afghanistan cannot be established by means of power. Western military strategists have been of the view for long that victory cannot be achieved in Afghanistan at any cost. In his message on the occasion of Eid, Mullah Omar had called the Afghan government forces as smugglers and crime-ridden, while calling for the immediate withdrawal of foreign troops from the soil of Afghanistan, making it an absolute condition before any dialogue could be initiated. The efforts by America and its allies to initiate dialogue are basically to create a feasible passage for its withdrawal."

WHITE